



March 8, 2023

Education Committee

HB 6842: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Local Food for Schools Incentive Program and Expansion of The CT Grown for CT Kids Grants Program

Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, and Connecticut General Assembly members of the Education Committee. My name is Ali Ghiorse and I am from Greenwich, Connecticut. Today, I am writing on **HB 6842: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Local Food for Schools Incentive Program and Expansion of The CT Grown for CT Kids Grants Program** and to ask for your support in moving this bill forward.

As a former Chef, I had the privilege of cooking for kids using seasonal, locally grown fruits and vegetables. This phase of my career was most rewarding as I saw many kids enjoy and celebrate their meal prepared with fresh ingredients. Eating seasonal produce at a young age helps to develop a taste and appreciation for fruit and vegetables throughout life, a foundational practice for a healthy body and mind.

Both the Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program and CT Grown for CT Kids, foster an equitable food system as it makes fresh food available to all kids, not just those from families who can afford to purchase locally. These programs build community, create a food culture and strengthen a local food economy. Farm to institution creates demand for CT Grown, which supports farmers, and establishes jobs. Additionally, it provides a pathway towards a resilient regionalized food system; with shorter supply chains, strengthening food security and reducing food waste. I urge you to support funding for this program, as it is a critical and wise investment for our youth, farms and schools.

Thank you, very much, for your time and service.

Ali Ghiorse, Founder, The Foodshed Network
Greenwich, CT